

State of Connecticut

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Testimony of Senator Rob Kane (R-32)

HB 5316, AN ACT REQUIRING A TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ENLARGE MUNICIPAL MANDATES AND AUTHORIZING A REVIEW OF CERTAIN MUNICIPAL BUDGETS

Planning and Development Committee

March 2, 2012

Senator Cassano, Representative Gentile, and members of the Planning and Development Committee, thank you for holding today's public hearing on HB 5316, *An Act Requiring a Two- Thirds Vote of the General Assembly to Enlarge Municipal Mandates and Authorizing a Review of Certain Municipal Budgets*.

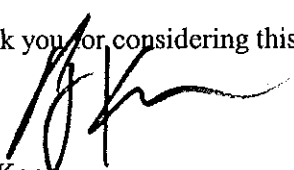
This legislation, which I will be co-sponsoring, calls for two crucial changes in legislation. First, it calls for a requirement that any new municipal mandate passed by the general assembly require a two-thirds vote of support in both the Connecticut House of Representatives and the Connecticut State Senate. This will provide a layer of protection for our towns while encouraging the legislative and executive branches to find solutions to the fiscal problems of this state without simply passing mandates onto municipalities.

Additionally, this bill calls for requiring each municipality having a population of thirty thousand or more that receives more than 35 percent of its annual operating budget from the state to submit to a state audit. Each audit would include recommendations for programmatic and management efficiencies, financial improvements, and reforms in the municipality.

Every municipality counts on the state's financial assistance to provide services and programs, and to run its schools. But there are some municipalities that are highly dependent on the state's financial assistance and these, I believe, warrant special attention from the state auditors. It makes sense to demand a close accounting of how this money is spent and in some cases these municipalities may benefit from recommendations by the auditors.

Connecticut's taxpayers have the right to know that their tax dollars are being spent wisely, and I believe it is the General Assembly's responsibility to provide this assurance. This legislation would put in place a system of checks and balances that will offer a measure of protection for municipalities from new mandates and will promote accountability that taxpayer funds are wisely spent.

Thank you for considering this legislation.


Rob Kane
Deputy Minority Leader